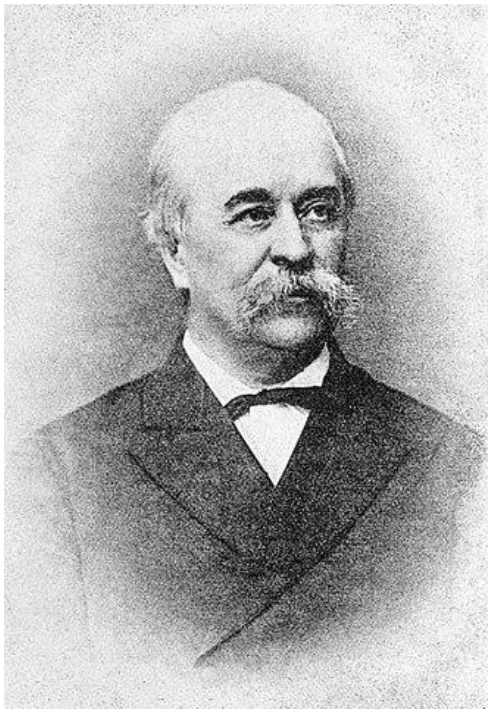
PD Ukrainian Writers




Portraits of G. P. Danilevsky and Lesya Ukrainka from Wikimedia Commons.

Grigory Petrovich Danilevsky (Russian: Григо´рий Петро´вич Даниле´вский; 26 April [O.S. 14 April] 1829 – 18 December [O.S. 6 December] 1890) was a Ukrainian, historical novelist, and Privy Councillor of Russia. Danilevsky is well known as the author of the novel Beglye v Novorossii (Fugitives in New Russia, 1862).
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Grigory_Petrovich_Danilevsky.jpg

Taras Hryhorovych Shevchenko (Ukrainian: Тара´с Григо´рович Шевче´нко [tɐˈrɑz ɦrɪˈɦɔrowɪtʃ ʃeuˈtʃɛnko]; 9 March [O.S. 25 February] 1814 – 10 March [O.S. 26 February] 1861), also known as Kobzar Taras, or simply Kobzar (kobzars are bards in Ukrainian culture), was a Ukrainian poet, writer, artist, public and political figure, as well as folklorist and ethnographer

Lesya Ukrainka[1] (Ukrainian: Леся Українка; born Larysa Petrivna Kosach, Ukrainian: Лариса Петрівна Косач; 25 February [O.S. 13 February] 1871 – 1 August [O.S. 19 July] 1913) was one of Ukrainian literature's foremost writers, best known for her poems and plays. She was also an active political, civil, and feminist activist.[2]
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These introductory bios are mostly from Wikipedia.



from **THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY**
By Lesya Ukrainka
from the Internet Archive PDF

CHARACTERS
Eleazar
Captives
Levites
Prophets
Overseers

[SETTING]
(*A wide plain. The red sunset turns the waters of the Euphrates to blood. Scattered on the plain are seen the tents of the Hebrew captives. Naked children seek shells in the mud and gather brushwood for the fires. Weary women, mostly old, in rags, are busied preparing supper, each at her own hearth, for the men that have just returned from the town after their toil and are sitting silently under the willows near the water. A little farther off, also under the willows, stand two groups, the Levites and the prophets. On the willows, over the prophets' heads, harps hang ; quivering from time to time, they jingle in the evening wind. Far away are seen the walls and towers of Babylon and sometimes there comes the noise of the city*.)

A Woman {at her fire) : Husband, come to supper.
(A man, still young, leaves a group and silently sits down.)
Woman : Why dost not eat bread ? (The man is silent.) Is it bitter ? There is nought to be done,poor thing, thou must eat.
The Man (mumbling like an old man) : I cannot eat.
Woman : Misery ! Hast no teeth ? Where is--
Man : There ! (Points to Babylon.)
Woman : Misery, misery, misery !
An Old Man (approaches an old woman sitting by the extinguished fire of another hearth, motionless,her head bowed down) : Give me supper ! (Thewoman is silent and motionless.) Why hast not prepared it ? (The woman is silent.) Why hast ashes on thy hair ? (The woman is silent, andbows still lower.) Where is our daughter ?
The Old Woman : There ! (Points to Babylon and pours ashes upon her head.)
Old Man : Adonai ! (Tears his garments and falls down. At a third fire sit only men, mostly old. A woman approaches timidly ; ragged children hangat her garments.)
The Woman : My fathers, pardon that I ask you; have ye not seen my husband ?
An Old Man : How is he called ?
The Woman : Ebenezer of Ossia.
Another Old Man : Was he so called before thou wert a widow ?

The Woman : What sayest thou ?
A Third Old Man : Do not kill thyself ! Foes do not torment the dead.
The Woman : What shall I do, miserable, with my little children ?
The Children : Mother, mother, mother !
A Mad Woman (wandering among the fires) : Happy the womb that did not bear ; happy the breast that gave not suck. Hey ! rejoice not, Babylonian woman ! Hey ! be not glad, mother of vipers' sons !
A Girl (whispers to her companion, pointing at the mad woman) : 'Tis from the time her child was killed in Jerusalem.
Companion : How terrible !
Girl : And I saw it with my own eyes, how the soldier seized her boy by his feet and struck at --
Companion : Be silent
The Levites (under the willows) : For our fathers' sin the Lord took from us the temple ; for our ancestors' dishonour He took away His church. And now, as a spendthrift's children, innocent we expiate our fathers' debt.
The Prophets : Jerusalem smote us with stones,and for it the wrath of the Lord smote her. The Daughter of Zion despised us, and for it the son of Baal subdued her.
First Levite (to another) : Why hast not been at prayers ?
Second Levite : The master sent me to the reckonings. The workmen from Haram are being paid for their labour at the king's palace.
First Levite : Couldst not find one of the scribesto take thy place ?
Second Levite : Service, brother ! The master says no men are so skilled at reckoning as theHebrews.
First Levite : True.
Second Levite (aside to him) : For my good help the chief gave me this ring.
First Levite : Glory to the Lord, that He hath distinguished His people by wisdom above the nations of all the world. (Aside.) Is there no need of another to help ? (They whisper.)
A Samarian Prophet : Thus spake the Lord : On Garisim I have builded an abode, on its summitI made Mine altar, but ye forsook it and knew not the house of My glory, as the foolish bibbing son knoweth not his father's abode and wandereth in outer darkness, a butt for strangers' children.
A Jewish Prophet : Thus spake the Lord : In Jerusalem I made Mine abode among the people, that, as bees come together to one hive, to one queen, so would ye come together unto Me, to the only Temple ; but, as a wild swarm, ye flew away, and for it I sent evil hornets against you.
Samarian Prophet : The lion of Judah ravished Israel and dispersed his sheep.
Jewish Prophet : Saul's descendants are fit to be keepers of flocks, but not of the people.
Samarian Prophet : The Lord of Israel shall reach thee, and through me. (Raises his staff against the Jewish Prophet.)
Jewish Prophet : Lord, remember Thy servant David. (Raises a stone to cast at the Samarian Prophet.)
(Eleazar, a young prophet and singer, just come from Babylon, throws himself between the two.)
Eleazar : Refrain ! Cover not with shame the names of Israel and Judah.
Samarian Prophet : Ah ! is it thou, prophet of shame ? And how hast thou glorified Israel andJudah ?

Jewish Prophet : Vile serpent, why earnest from that nest ? There is thy God and thy people,begone and glorify them !
First Levite : May the Lord vomit thee out of Hismouth, may thy name disappear as spittle ! (Thepeople gather round.)
Second Levite (catching a harp from the willows): I will break this cursed vessel.
Eleazar (catching his hand) : Touch not my harp,for it is innocent of my sins ! Curse me, if thou thinkest I am worthy, but curse not the holy harp.
Third Levite : And how has it sanctified itself ?
Eleazar : That never from the first rang a string insincerely.
A Boy : Aha ! Therefore thou didst hang it there.
Eleazar (to the Boy, sadly) : Why, youth, sayest thou so ?
Boy : Pretend not thou dost not understand !
An Old Man : This youth told thee, Eleazar, whatthy conscience would have told thee—but a mute cannot speak.
A Man : And it is a vanity to talk to the deaf. (A child stretches out its arms to the harp.)
The Child : Uncle, give me the toy.
First Mother : I told thee, dare not to come to this man.
An Old Woman (to a girl standing near) : I see there is no more shame in Israel, when a girl stands uncovered and looks upon a traitor.
The Girl : But I
First Woman : See, poor thing, it is a great woe when one cursed by God steals a girl's heart.
The Girl : If he be cursed, I also curse him. (Veils herself and goes away.)
Eleazar (to all) : Fathers and brothers, mothers and sisters, since when is it a custom among us to condemn without judging ? Truly, clearly tell me, why am I become as a leper among you ?
\ The Old Man : Thou becamest leprous in Babylon, singing for money in the courts to the sons of Baal.
Eleazar : Are ye not all gathered here in Babylon
for labour ?
First Man : Labourers do not serve Moloch.
Eleazar : Whom then do their arms and vessels serve ? Have they not built such an abodeforMoloch, as never had our Lord in Jerusalem?
First Prophet : Taunt not captives with theirslavery !
Eleazar : Am I not a captive ? Why curse yemefor my forced labour ?
Second Prophet : The cord, the spade, the ploughand axe in men's hands are men's slaves ; buttheword in a prophet's mouth must serve Godonly,and none other.
The Old Man : Yet wilt thou ask for judgment,Eleazar ?
Eleazar : I will, though the judgment end with stones. The Lord liveth ! Ye must judgebytruth ; an unjust curse shall turn against you.
The Old Man : Let us hear him. Let it not be said we forsook truth on the' ruins of Jerusalem. Tellus what constrained thee to sell the word.
Eleazar : That none bought my hands. My father did not teach me to labour, and weak my mother bred me. Though the harp obeys my hands,nor plough nor axe obeys them. I fell under a burden, and the overseer drove me from the labour.
The Old Man : Let then thy father and mother feed thee, who have not taught thee to earn

bread.
Eleazar : In Jerusalem I earned honourably by the means they taught me, and here too—but the bread burns that my father brings from Babylon ; hard it is to eat from a father's slavery.
First Levite ; Not only bread thy father brings, but also golden rings.
Eleazar (to all) : Teach this Levite that gold burns, and not only shines.
First Levite {slyly) : Why does thy father's work burn so ?
Eleazar : Am I judged here or my father ? Bring then all fathers to judgment, that for their family lose their souls.
First Levite : Why didst not cry to the nation to feed thee with the bread wherewith it feeds Levites and cripples ?
Eleazar : I am not Levite nor cripple.
A Little Boy (to his father) : Daddy, give me bread !
The Father : I have none, my son.
A Man : Dost see ? He heard talk of bread and eating, and says too, "Give me bread."



THE KOBZAR OF THE UKRAINE - *Being Select Poems of Taras Shevchenko Done into English Verse with Biographical Fragments* by Alexander Jardine Hunter
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from the Internet Archive etext

Hamaleia

Hamalein is an historical romance. The poet represents one of the excursions of the Zaparoggian Cossacks under the leader- of Hamaleia on Skutari, the Turkish city on the Bosphorus. The Cossacks sauce western Europe from the Tartar and Turkish invasions, by fighting the invaders in the land of the barbarian. The poem describes one of these excursions where the Cossacks animated by the desire of revenging themselves on the Turks and freeing their brothers who were lying as captives in Turkish prisons, undertake a perilous trip in small wooden boats over the stormy Black Sea to Skutari, open the prisons, burn the city, and return home with rich spoils and their freed brethren.

AH breeze there is none,
Nor do the waters run
From our Ukraina's land.
Perhaps, in council there they stand.
To march against the Turk demand.
We hear not in this foreign land.

Blow winds, blow across the sea.
Bring tidings of our land so free.
Come from Dnieper's Delta low,
Dry our tears and chase away our woe.
Roar in play thou sea so blue.
In von boats are Cossacks true,

Their caps above are dimly seen.
Rescue for us this may mean.
Once more we'll hear Ukraina's story.
Once more the ancient Cossack glory
We'll hear before we die."

So in Skutari the Cossacks sang,

Their tears rolled down, their wailing ran
Bosphorus groaned at the Cossack cry.
And then he raised his waves on high.
And shivering like a great grey bull,
His waters roaring far and full
Into the Black Sea’s ribs were hurled.
The sea sent on great Bosphorus’ cry,
To where the sands of the Delta lie.

And then the waters of Dnieper pale
Tn turn took up the mournful tale.

The father Dnieper rears his crest,
Shakes the foam from off his breast-
With laughter now aloud he calls
To spirits of the forest walls.

"Hortessa sister river, deep,

Time it is to wake from sleep.

Brother forest, sister river,

Come our children to deliver."

And now the Dnieper is clad with boats,
The Cossack song o’er the water floats.

"In Turkey over there.

Are wealth and riches rare.

Hey, hey, blue sea play.

Then roar upon the shore,
Bringing with you guests so gay.

"This Turkey has in her pockets
Dollars and ducats.

We don’t come pockets to pick.
Fire and sword will do the trick,
We mean to free our brothers.

"There the janissary crouches,
There are pashas on soft couches.
Hey-ho, foemen ware,

For nothing do we care,

Ours are liberty and glory.”

On they sail a-singing

The sea to the wind gives heed,

In foremost boat the helm a-guiding,
P.rave Hamaleia takes the lead.

"Oh. Hamaleia. our hearts are fainting,
Behold the sea in madness raving."
"Don't fear." he says, "these spurting
fountains,

We'll hide behind the water mountains."

All slumber in the harem.

Byzantium’s paradise.

Skutari sleeps, but Bosphorus
In madness shouts, "Arise!

Awake Byzantium!" it roars and groans.
"Awake them not. Oh Bosphorus."

Replies the sea in thunder tones.

"If thou dost I'll fill thy ribs with sand.
Bury thee in mud, change thee to solid land.
Perhaps thou knowest not the guest
I bring to break the sultan's rest-"

So the sea insisted,

For he loved the brave Slavonic band:

And Bosphorus desisted.

While in slumber lay the Turkish land.

The lazy Sultan in his harem slept.

But only in Skutari the weary pris'ners wept.
For something are they waiting.

To God from dungeon praying.

While the waves go roaring by.

"Oh. loved God of Ukraine’s land.

To us in prison stretch thy hand:

Slaves are we a Cossack band.

Shame it is now in truth to say,

Shame it will be at judgement day
For us from foreign tomb to rise.

And at thy court, to the world’s surprise

Show Cossack hands in chains."

“Strike and kill,

Now the infidels will get their fill
Death to the unbelievers all.”

How they .scream beyond the wall!

They’ve heard of Hamaleia's fame,
Skutari maddens at his name.

“Strike on,” he shouts, “kill and slay
To the castle break your way.”

All the guns of Skutari roar
The foes in frenzy onward pour, •

The cossacks rush with panting breath
'The janissaries fall in death.

Hamaleia in Skutari
Dances through the flames in glee.
To the jail his way he makes,
Through the prison doors he breaks,
Off the feet the fetters takes.

“Flv awav my birds so gray,
Tn the town to share the prey.”

But the falcons trembled
Nor their fears dessembled

So long they had not heard
A single Christian word.

Night herself was frightened.
No flames her darkness lightened.

The old mother could not see
How the Cossacks pay their fee.

"Fear not! Look ahead,

To the Cossack banquet spread.

Dark over all, like a common dav.

And this no little holiday."

"No sneak thieves with Hamaleia.

To eat their bacon silently
Without a frying pan."

"Let's have a light,"

Now burning bright
To heaven flames Skutari,

With all its ruined navy.

Byzantium awakes, its eyes it opens wide
With grinding teeth hastes to its
comrade's side,

Byzantium roars and rages,

With hands to the shore it reaches,

From waters gasping strives to rise,

And then with sword in heart it dies.

With fires of hell Skutari's burning,
Bazaars with streams of blood are churning

Broad Bosphorus pours in its waves.

Like blackbirds in a bush
The Cossacks fiercely rush.

No living soul escapes.

Untouched by fire,

They the walls down tear,

Silver and gold in their caps they bear,
And load their boats with riches rare.

Burns Skutari, ends the frav,

The warriors gather and come away,
Their pipes with burning cinders light,
And row their boats through waves flame
bright.

Kobzars

*T/texc are the wandering minstrels of
the Ukraine.*

*They play on an instrument called
the Kohza which somewhat resembles a man-
dolin. Often in former days they were old
prisoners of war—too old to work'—so their
Turkish captors first blinded them and then
set them at liberty.*

I Yanderiny among the villages , guided
by some little boy, they earned their bread
by singing folk-songs and hero-tales to the
accompanimeut of the Kohza.

Shevchenko published his
poems with the title “ Kobzar."

By the road the Kobzar sat
And on his kobza played.

Around him youths and maidens
Like poppy flowers arrayed.

So the Kobzar played and sang'

Of many an old old story;

Of wars with Russian, Pole and Tartar
And the ancient Cossack glory.

He sang of the wars of Taras brave.

Of battle fought in the morning early.

Of the fallen Cossack's grass-grown grave
Till smiles and tears did mingle fairly.

"Once on a time the Hetmans ruled.
It comes not back again;

In olden days we masters were
This never comes again.

These glories of old Cossack lore
Shall be forgotten nevermore.

Ukraine, Ukraine!

Mother mine, Mother mine!

TO THE MASTER

"AH, wherefore wert Thou crucified,
Thou Christ, the Son of God?
That the word of Truth be glorified?

Or that we good folks should 'scape the rod
Of avenging wrath, by faith confest?
Meanwhile of Thee we make a jest.
Mocking Thy love in our conduct's test.

Cathedrals and chapels with Icons grand!
'Mid smoke of incense lavers stand.

There before Thy pictured Presence
Crowds unwearied make obeisance;

For spoil, for war, for slaughter seek
Their brother's blood to shed they pray.
And then before Thy form so meek

The loot of burning towns they lay.

TO JACQUES DE BALMONT

So they drove thee along, my dearest
friend.

For Ukraina did'st thou shed
That good heart's blood of thine so red.
Our country's hangman, shame to think.
Muscovite poison gave thee to drink.

Oh, friend of mine, unforgotten friend.
Ukraine to thee doth welcome send.

Let thy spirit fly with Cossacks bold.
Along the shores of Dnieper old.

O'er ancient tombs hold watch and guard
And weep with us in labors hard.

Till I return to meet thee,
My songs I send to greet thee.

Such songs they are of bitter woe.
Yet ever, always, these I sow.

Thoughts and songs forever sowing.
To the care of winds bestowing.

Gentle winds of Ukraine
Shall bear them like the dew
To that dear land of mine
To greet my friends so true



Introductory chapters to:
PRINCESS TARAKANOVA.
A Dark Chapter of Russian History
by G. P. Danilevski
Translator: Ida De Mouchanoff
from The Project Gutenberg EBook

PART I.

DIARY OF LIEUTENANT KONSOV.

"There can be no doubt she is an adventuress."--_Letter of Ekaterina II._

CHAPTER I.

TEMPEST-TOSSED.

MAY, 1775: ATLANTIC OCEAN,
Frigate _Northern Eagle_.

A storm has been raging for already three days. We have been so tossed about that it has been impossible to write. Our frigate, the _Northern Eagle_, is not far from Gibraltar. We have lost our rudder, and our sails are all torn, and now the current is carrying us south-eastwards. Where shall we land? what will become of us?

It is night; the wind has fallen, and the sea is calmer. I am writing in my cabin. All that I have time to write of what I have seen and undergone, I will place in a bottle, and cast it upon the waters; and you who may chance to find it I entreat, by all that is sacred, to send it to its address. Ah! all-powerful God, grant me powers of memory; enlighten my poor soul, so torn with doubt!

* * * * *

I am a sailor, Pavel Konsov, an officer in the navy of our most gracious Majesty, Empress of all the Russias, Ekaterina II. Five years

ago, by the mercy of God, I succeeded in distinguishing myself at the famous battle of Chesma. All the world knows of our brave companions, Lieutenant Elien and Lieutenant Klokachov, who, on the night of the twenty-sixth of June, 1770, with four fire-ships and a few Grecian boats, hastily equipped, bravely advanced upon the Turkish fleet at Chesma, and rendered valuable assistance in its destruction. I, though so insignificant, had the good fortune, under cover of the fire-ships and the dark, to throw with my own hand, from our ship, _January_, the first fire-ball at the enemy. It was this fire-ball which, falling into and igniting the powder magazine, caused the explosion near the ship of the Turkish admiral from which the whole fleet took fire.

Next morning, of over a hundred formidable men-of-war, some of sixty and some of ninety guns, frigates, galliots, and _galères_,--not one remained! On the surface of the waters were visible only wreckage and numbers of dead bodies.

Our victory was sung in odes by the celebrated poet Heraskov, and several lines were dedicated to my humble self, until then unknown to the world. This poem was in every one's mouth. The English in the Russian service--for instance, Mackenzie and Dugdale, who served on one of the fire-ships--took to themselves the credit for the greater part of the glory won at the battle of Chesma. But they did not really much surpass our own officers and men, who all distinguished themselves by their courage and gallantry. After this event I was found worthy of receiving the rank of lieutenant, and the Count Alexis Orloff, the hero of Chesma, having honoured me by his preference, I became his aide-de-camp. My career was thus, so far, very fortunate. Life, on the whole, smiled upon me. But sometimes a fatal destiny pursues man. Suddenly fortune ceased to favour me, angry maybe, at my abrupt, albeit forced, departure from my native land.

Resting on our laurels reaped at Chesma, we led joyous lives. We received flattering invitations from the French, Spanish, Venetians, and men of other nations. All at once, upon me, the alien, there fell a new, unexpected, and very terrible temptation.

The war continued, but Count Orloff, after many noisy battles, lived in luxurious ease with the fleet. He was wont to say, "I am as happy as Enoch, who was taken up to heaven." But these were mere words, for, since he had taken an active part in placing Ekaterina upon the throne, wild and bold ideas were ever coursing through his brain.

Once, when sailing in the Adriatic with the squadron, he despatched me on a secret mission to the brave, warlike Montenegros. This was in the

year 1773. The scouts made all arrangements wisely and adroitly; and at night, taking with me what I required on shore, I landed with great caution, and speedily conducted my business. But on our return voyage we were sighted and pursued by the Turkish coastguards. We succeeded in defending ourselves for a considerable time; but in the end our sailors were all killed, while I, severely wounded in the shoulder, lay unconscious at the bottom of the boat, where I was found, and whence I was removed, a prisoner, to Stamboul.

I was disguised in a national Albanian costume. Nevertheless, my captors discovered that I belonged to the Russian navy, and, at first, thinking no doubt that they would receive a good ransom for me, paid me great attention. Ah! thought I, as soon as they find out that their prisoner is no other than Lieutenant Konsov, who threw the first fire-ball which caused the explosion and destruction of their staffship at Chesma, what will my lot be then?

CHAPTER II.

MY IMPRISONMENT.

My imprisonment lasted for about two years, coming to an end in the year 1775.

At first I was kept shut up in one of the wings of a seven-towered castle, but afterwards I was chained and confined in one of the three hundred mecheti (mosques) of Stamboul. I don't know whether at last, by some means, the Turks learned that one of their prisoners was Konsov, or whether, having lost all hopes of a ransom, they resolved to take advantage of my knowledge and abilities; but this I know, they tried to convert me to Mohammedanism.

The mosque in which I was imprisoned is situated on the shores of the Bosphorus, and through my window-grating I could watch the blue sea and the vessels sailing to and fro. The mulla who came to visit me was of Sclavonic origin; he was a Bulgarian from Gabrova. We therefore understood one another without much difficulty.[3] My visitor set to work in a roundabout way to convert me to the Turkish faith. He praised the Turkish people, their customs and morals, and extolled the power and glory of the Sultan. At first, though very indignant at all this, I kept silence, but at last I began to contradict. Thereupon, in order

to gain my confidence in himself and his faith, he obtained as a first step permission for my removal to a more comfortable cell, and for my being provided with better food. Accordingly I was transferred to the ground floor of the mosque, part of which the mulla himself inhabited, and was allowed tobacco and all sorts of sweetmeats and wine. Still, notwithstanding all this, my chains were left on me. My teacher (himself a renegade), according to the law of Mohammed, could not drink wine, but he enticed and tempted me to. “Turn Islamist,” he would say, “and then how happy you will be: your chains will at once fall off you. And see how many ships there are: you may enter the Turkish service on one of them, and in time become one of our captains!”

I lay on my mat without touching any of the tempting viands, and scarcely hearing a word that my tempter said, for my mind was filled with thoughts of my native land. I murmured the names of my friends and of all dear to me, and pondered over my lost happiness. My heart was breaking, my soul was torn with uncertainty and grief. Ah! how well I remember those sad hours, filled with such sorrowful musings!

As I now recollect, my thoughts then wandered to the far-off village, my native Konsovka. I was an orphan, and already had obtained my commission. From the training college I had come straight to the house of my grandmother, whose name was Agraffena Konsova. Not far from us, in the town of Baturin, lived Rakitin, a retired brigadier, a widower, whose estates in the country adjoined ours. Leff Hieraclieovitch[4] had one daughter, Irena Lvovna. To tell all briefly, what with going to the church of Rakitin, visiting Irena at her father’s halls, and our secret meetings and walks together, we fell in love with one another. My love for Irena was passionate and unrestrained. With her dusky skin and luxurious black hair, she was charming. She was my life, my idol, to whom I offered prayers night and day. We confessed our love, and day by day became dearer to each other. Ah! those moments, those meetings, those vows!

We began to send each other love letters, full of passionate avowals of love. I was always fond of music, and Irena used to play enchantingly upon the clavichord, and would sing in a lovely voice pieces from Glück, Bach, and Handel. We met often. In this way the summer passed. Ah! dear and never-to-be-forgotten days!

Unfortunately, one of my letters fell into the hands of Irena’s father. Was Rakitin too stern with his daughter, or did he talk her over, and so persuade her to give me up, to change me for another?... I know not; it is all too painful for me even to try to remember.

It was autumn, and, as I well recollect, a praznik (holiday); we were preparing for church, when suddenly we heard a carriage drive into our yard. A footman in splendid livery came forward, and placed in my grandmother's hands a packet which he had brought for her. My heart throbbed; my presentiments were fulfilled: Irena's father had sent a firm and decided refusal to my suit.

> "MATUSHKA[5] AGRAFFENA VLASSOVNA,--
>
> "Your Pavel Efstafevitch[6] is worthy in every way, but he is not a fit husband for my daughter; and it is useless for him to send love letters to her. Let him not be offended; we always were and always shall be friends. My earnest hope is that your godson and grandchild may find another bride, a hundred times more suitable than my daughter."

That letter moved me deeply. The light of heaven seemed extinguished: all that was dearest to me was lost; all my happiness ruined.

Proud, rich, and related to the Razoumovskis, Rakitin mercilessly scorned the poor suitor, who also was of noble blood; yea, of nobler blood perhaps than Rakitin's own. His pride in his distinguished relatives, who had been favourites of the late empress, had hardened his heart. Often had I heard Irena addressed by her father as the future Fräulein (maid of honour).

"God forgive him!" I repeated, like one who had lost his senses, as I strode up and down the rooms which once I had loved so much, but which now seemed to me so lonely. The day had been very cloudy, with occasional showers of rain. I ordered my horse to be saddled, and, in my despair, rode off to the steppes. I did not draw rein until I reached the borders of the forest which surrounded the estate of Rakitin. There I wandered through the brushwood like a madman. The wind whistled through the trees and swept over the bare fields. As night came on, I fastened my horse to a tree, and, leaving the forest, made my way through the garden to the window of Irena's room. Ah! what I felt at that moment! I remember, it seemed to me that I had only to call her, and she would throw herself into my arms, and we would go together to the end of the world. Fool that I was! I hoped to see her, to exchange thoughts with her, to pour out my heart, so full of bitter pain. "Leave your father! leave him!" I whispered, gazing in at her window. "He does not pity you; he does not love you." But I pleaded in vain: her window was dark, and nowhere in all the silent house could I hear one word or see one sign of life. On the following night I again went through the garden, and watched the well-known window, through

which Irena had often given me her hand or thrown me a letter. Would she not look out? would she not give me some message? One night, after sending her a note, to which I received no answer, I even determined to kill myself before her window, and took my pistol in my hand.

“But no,” I decided. “Why such a sacrifice? Perhaps Irena has already bartered me for a richer suitor. Wait a little; I may find out who the happy rival is.” Afterwards, but too late, I learned that Rakitin, after writing his refusal of me, had carried his daughter off to a distant property owned by one of his relations, somewhere on the Oka, and was keeping her there in strict confinement.

CHAPTER III.

IMPORTANT NEWS.

My grandmother was not less struck by this than I. One day, about a week later, calling me to her, she said: “You have guessed who your rival is? One distantly related to the Rakitins; a prince and Kammerherr (gentleman of the chamber). I have found out, Pavelinka, that they sent for him on purpose, and that he was visiting them all the time you were looking for her, and that it was he who helped them to carry her off without leaving any trace. Forget her, _mon ange_, forget Irena; for no doubt she resembles her father in his pride. Console yourself. God will send you a better wife.”

I felt angry and petulant. “My grandmother is right,” I said; and there and then I determined to strive to forget everything. If Irena had had any heart, she would have found some opportunity of writing me a line and sending it. I remember especially how one night I found amongst some papers a hymn from “Iphigenia,” one of Glück’s operas not yet produced in Russia, which I had obtained with great difficulty from an amateur musician for Irena, but which I had been unable to give to her. With tears in my eyes I burnt it. After long days of sorrowful despair, I decided to leave my birthplace. The parting with my grandmother was very touching, for we both felt that we should never meet again.

* * * * *

Agraffena Vlassovna, during her retreat in a neighbouring convent, took cold, and after a short illness, died. I was left alone in the world,

like a forgotten blade of grass in a field.

Having left Konsovka, I wandered for some time about Moscow, where I made the acquaintance of Count Orloff. Thence I went to Petersburg, and tried to get some information concerning the Rakitins, who were still living on the Oka. Always hoping to get news of my faithless Irena, I made many inquiries; but no one could tell me what I wanted to know. My furlough was not yet ended; I was free. But what was left in the world for me? What could I do? What could I undertake? Meanwhile, from the south, from over the water, came news that was on every one's lips. It was the beginning of the Turkish war. A happy idea flashed through my mind. I applied to the Board of Admiralty, and begged to be transferred to the squadron then sailing in Grecian waters. Count Feodor Orloff helped me very much by giving me a letter of introduction to Count Alexis, who was at that time admiral of the fleet in the Mediterranean Sea. How I came there and what I went through, it would be useless to relate. Always repeating the name that once was so dear to me, I threw myself into every danger. I courted death at Spezzia, at Navarino, and at Chesma. "Irisha! Irisha![7] what have you done with me! O my God! put an end to my life!" I cried. But death did not come. Instead of being killed, I was taken prisoner soon after the glorious battle of Chesma, and left in dreary captivity in Stamboul!

* * * * *

The mulla who visited me became more and more friendly, but also more and more persistent. We met every day, and had long conversations together. Sometimes he made me very angry, even mad, I might say; but at other times he amused me. Then sometimes I would entice him, for company's sake, to defy the command of the prophet, which, perhaps, a minute before he had been teaching me with much fervour, by taking a glass of wine with me; and would pour the wine out for him myself. My teacher could do nothing, of course, but try to please me, and so very heartily began to partake of the wines of Kioska, and others which he used to bring me. Our meetings continued. We talked sometimes of the Orient, of Russia, and many other things.

One evening--it must have been about the middle of the year 1774--at the time when the Muezzin[8] from the high tower began the call to evening prayer, my teacher, with an air of great mystery, and not without showing some wicked pleasure, asked me whether I knew that there had appeared in Italy a very powerful aspirant to the Russian crown, a dangerous rival to the then reigning Empress Ekaterina. I was very much astonished at the news, and for some time was unable to speak. The mulla again related his story, and on my asking who

the impostor was he answered, “A secret daughter of the late Empress Elizabeth Petrowna.” “That is all nonsense and stupid gossip of your bazaars!”--The mulla was much offended; his eyes sparkled with passion. “No, not gossip,” he exclaimed, as he took from under his robe a crumpled piece of one of the newspapers of Utrecht. “You had best be thinking of what awaits your native land.”

My heart, which was beating so loyally for the great empress then ruling over us, suddenly sank. I read the newspaper, and became convinced that the mulla was right. In Paris first, then in Germany, and afterwards in Venice, a person had appeared calling herself “Elizabeth, Princess of all the Russias.” At the time of writing, this adventuress was preparing to go to the Sultan, to ask him to aid her with an army then encamped on the banks of the Danube in enforcing her claims. The mulla remained with me a little longer, and then went out, casting a side glance at me as he left the room. The news which I had just heard troubled me very much. “How so?” thought I. “Is it not enough that fate sent us the horrible insurrection of Pougachoff?” of which I heard in my prison, “and then the Turks? Are we now to be troubled with this pretender? The former burnt and desolated the whole Po-Volga;[9] this one wants to disturb the whole of the south.” I was quite beside myself, and strode from corner to corner of my cell. In my anger, I went up to my window, seized hold of the grating, and shook it with all my might. I was ready to tear it with my teeth. “Oh! for wings! for wings!” I cried to God. I would have flown to the fleet, told them everything, and warned Orloff, who was so devoted to the empress.... My prayers were answered in a most marvellous manner. Never shall I forget it, though I live for a century.

Devising a hundred plans for escape, my first idea was to prepare some kind of key to loosen my chains. On an earthenware pot I succeeded in sharpening part of an old nail (upon which I used to hang my clothes, and which I had taken from the wall), and, after much painstaking, fashioned it into a key. It is impossible to describe my joy when, for the first night, I took off my chains and went to bed without them. Next morning I again fettered myself, and carefully hid the key in a crevice in the wall. My plan was this:--after having very quickly loosened my chains, I would kill the renegade mulla with them, and run away from the prison without being seen. But where? Thus I planned; but God, who holds our hearts in His hand, delivered me from this sin. The mulla continued to visit me and to drink the wine, which through his intercession had been provided for me in abundance. At last my chance came. Having chosen an evening, I decided upon telling the mulla that, convinced by his wise teaching, I had resolved to embrace the Mohammedan faith. He was transported with delight, and in his joy

partook so heartily of the wine as to become intoxicated and begin to doze. I kept refilling his glass. “No,” he repeated continually, “I cannot. I shall miss the prayers; I shall be denounced.” But I again filled the glass, and he, blinking at me knowingly, again emptied it, threw himself on the floor, and beginning to hum a Bulgarian song, was soon fast asleep. We were both about the same height; my beard, which during my imprisonment had grown very long, only differed from his by being of a slightly lighter colour.

“Oh! good God! is it possible,” thought I, with a thrill of joy, “that this is liberty at last?”

Drawing the enormous white turban over my eyes, I devoutly bowed my head, and with silent footsteps and the rosary in my hand, as if repeating a prayer, I slowly left the prison, and crossed the courtyard. The sentinels at the porches and the gates of the mosque were walking silently backwards and forwards with their muskets; but as they did not recognise me I escaped detention. For some time the noise of the street confused me; I quite lost my senses. But I quickly recovered myself, and hastening my steps, soon reached the sea-shore. I signalled to one of the boatmen, took my place in the first little boat that approached me, and, bowing still lower, motioned to the boatman to row me to one of the nearest ships. It was a foreign one, as I had already remarked from my windows. I saw now that it was a French schooner, quite ready to sail, as I could tell by her flag.

CHAPTER IV.

I SEE THE PRINCESS.

A dark, handsome, spirited Frenchman, the commanding officer of the schooner, soon showed me that he was a worthy subject of the nation to which he belonged. Seeing in me a Russian sailor, he looked at me, was silent a moment, and then whispered, “Are you Konsov?”

“What makes you think so?” I asked, not without some trepidation.

“Oh! how glad I should be if it were so!” he answered, “for we all pity brave Konsov very much, and constantly ask after him. I should be very happy to be of any service to him.”

There was nothing to be done; and I concluded it was better to reveal myself. The captain was overjoyed; he conducted me to his own cabin, and at once promised to pay the boatman; whom, however, for safety's sake, he first ordered to be hoisted on deck with the boat. The sails were then unfurled, and the anchor weighed. It was night when the schooner set sail, and by morning we had left Stamboul far behind us. The mulla must have slept soundly and long, for we were not pursued. My boatman, who was sent back from one of the villages we passed, having received all that had been promised him, and the mulla's clothes in which I had escaped into the bargain, was only too glad to hold his tongue. The French officers gave me proper clothing, and generously furnished me with a sum of money, to which all had subscribed. They politely offered to put me on board the first Russian vessel we should meet in the Italian seas.

Meanwhile, I heard from the captain that the mysterious Russian Princess was no longer in Venice, but was now at Ragusa, past which town we should have to sail. I asked to be put on shore, but the French officers did all they could to dissuade me, pointing out the risk I should run in being again so near the Turks. This counsel had no effect on me; I insisted on landing.

After having thanked my generous preservers (who even refused to take my signature for their loan), I soon set foot on the shores of the republic of Ragusa, where I obtained information concerning the lady who so deeply interested me.

This mysterious Princess had already conquered the hearts of half the inhabitants of the town. Much talk was going on. I found a great many Poles and persons of different nationalities at the hotel I had chosen, who formed part of the Princess's retinue. All these personages fought shy of me at first, and showed great distrust, but on learning who I was, and that, in my joy at my miraculous preservation, I wished to go immediately on board the squadron of Count Orloff, they ceased to fear me, and without reserve began to tell me all about the Princess. They even offered to procure me an audience, if I wished it. "But who is she? and where has she lived until now?" I asked some of her followers.

"She is the daughter of your late Empress Elizabeth, by a secret marriage with Count Razoumovski," was the answer. "In her childhood she was carried to the frontiers of Persia, and has since, under different assumed names, lived at Kiel, Berlin, London, and many other places. In Paris she was Dame D'Azov, and in Germany and here in Ragusa she bears the title of the Countess of Pinneberg. German princes and others have wooed her, the French Court assigned her apartments at their consul's,

and were quite ready to give her aid and protection."

All this troubled me greatly. "Kiel! Berlin!" thought I. "Kiel is in Holstein. It played a most important part in the history of Anna and Elizabeth, the daughters of Peter the Great. Is it possible that in Petersburg no importance is attached to all this? What will be done when all is known about this aspirant to the throne?"

The Poles then offered to take me to be presented to the Countess of Pinneberg. I dressed myself, trimmed my moustache and beard properly, and powdered, perfumed, and curled my hair. I met with every attention at the house of the Countess. The Hofmarshall, Baron Korf, led me into the reception room. I looked about me, and noticed that the walls were tapestried with blue silk brocade, and that the furniture was upholstered in pink satin. All at once I heard steps and a gay voice.

The Princess Elizabeth entered the room, surrounded by a brilliant retinue. I learned afterwards who these were. Her very devoted friend, the celebrated Prince Radzivill, in a blue velvet _kaftan_[10] literally blazing with diamonds; near him his sister, the beautiful Countess of Moravia, and the Princess Sangoushko. After these came Count Pototski, in a beautiful red _kountouska_,[11] all embroidered with gold. The count was then at the head of the Polish confederation, our enemy. Next came the proud and rich Starosta Pinski, Count Prgezdetski, and near him stood the influential young confederate, the famous duellist, Charnomski, with several of Radzivill's officers. Pototski and Prgezdetski wore ribbons and stars. I noticed that the Princess was dressed in an amazon of yellow silk, with gold embroidery, and that it was covered with black gauze; that she wore a small white hat with black ostrich feathers, and a pink mantle trimmed with blonde, and that at her belt were a pair of very small pistolettes of magnificent workmanship. She held a riding-whip in her hand, for she was just going to start for a ride on horseback. The proud Polish magnates addressed the Princess as "Altesse," and when she sat down, remained standing; and in answering her questions bowed so low that they almost seemed to be kneeling.

I must confess that the Princess greatly impressed me. I saw before me a beauty of the first order, between twenty-three and twenty-four years of age, taller than the generality of people, graceful, slender, with lovely auburn hair, a very fair skin, beautiful pink cheeks, and a few freckles, which rather suited her style of beauty. Her eyes were hazel, very large and open; one of them rather squinted, and thus gave her an arch and playful look. But, what was far more important, as a child, and later on as a youth, I had often looked upon the portraits of the

late Empress Elizabeth; and now on examining the Princess closely I was struck by the likeness to them.

The Princess noticed my confusion with evident pleasure. Saying a few gracious words to me in French, she gave me her hand to kiss, and having received me with all the ceremony etiquette exacted, with a look dismissed her retinue, and motioned me to a chair. We were alone.

CHAPTER V.

MY INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCESS.

After having exchanged a few phrases--we spoke French, but I noticed that the Princess let fall many Italian exclamations--we both fell into a most awkward silence.

“You are a Russian officer--a sailor?” asked the Princess.

“Just so--Your--Serene Highness,” I answered, hesitating a little, not knowing how to address her.

“I know that you have highly distinguished yourself. Your name made a noise in the world after Chesma,” she continued; “and to crown all, you have suffered a long imprisonment.”

I was greatly agitated, and remained silent; she also paused. At last she began again, and even though so many years have elapsed, I seem to hear that low, charming contralto voice of hers,--

“Listen,”--said she. “I am a Russian princess, the daughter of your once beloved empress. It is true, is it not, that my mother, the daughter of Peter the Great, was much loved? I, both by blood and by her testament, am her only heiress.”

“Yes. But you know,” I at last ventured to say, “that there now reigns the no less beloved Empress Ekaterina the Great.”

“I know, I know,” interrupted the Princess, “how all powerful and idolized by her people the present empress is; and it is not for me--poor, weak, and abandoned by all, torn from the Imperial house, and from the land of my birth--to try to dispute the throne with her. I am

the most devoted of her slaves."

"Then what are you seeking? what are you expecting?" I asked with astonishment.

"Protection, and that my rights may be respected."

"Excuse me," I returned; "but you must first prove your birth and your rights."

"I have the proofs here," the Princess replied; and, hastily rising, she opened the drawer of a Buhl side-table, with silver incrustations. "Here is the testament of my grandfather, Peter I., and this one is my mother's, Elizabeth's."

The Princess tendered me a French version of the papers mentioned. I looked them over hastily.

"But these are only copies," said I; "mere translations."

"Oh, yes; but make your mind easy: the originals are in safe hands.... How would it be possible to carry such important documents about with me; the risk would be too great," answered the Princess, turning her head a little from me. Then she moved to the other side of the room, where, in heavy gilt frames, hung two oil paintings: one a remarkably good copy of the portrait of the late Empress Elizabeth Petrowna, with a small crown upon her head; the other that of the Princess now standing before me.

"Do you see the likeness?" she said, looking at me.

"Well, yes, there is a likeness. I noticed it as soon as I came in," I answered. "Allow me to ask how long ago that portrait was taken?"

"This very year, at Venice.... The celebrated Piacetti painted my intended bridegroom's portrait, the Prince Radzivill's, and begged to be allowed to paint mine at the same time."

"Mysterious coincidence!" I exclaimed, with uncontrollable agitation; "we see things past all imagining. The dead rise out of their graves. There beyond the Volga the Emperor Peter III., buried in the face of all the nation;[12] here, unexpected, undivined, the daughter of the Empress Elizabeth."

"Do not, if you please, confound me with Pougachoff," answered the

Princess, slightly reddening; “although he gives himself out as the Emperor, coins his money with the legend _Redivivus et Ultor_ (the risen Avenger), still, as yet, he is only my lord-lieutenant in that part of the country.”

“How so?” I answered, quite astonished. “Then you also confess that he is an impostor?”

“Do not ask who he is,” mysteriously answered the Princess; “afterwards you shall learn all; the time has not yet come. He has already conquered many towns--Kasan, Orenburg, Saratov--and all the shores of the Volga. I know nothing of his past. Let God be his judge; but I--I am really and truly the daughter of the Empress Elizabeth, and cousin to the Emperor Peter III.”

“But who was your father?” I ventured to ask.

“Is it possible that you do not guess?” she answered, slightly frowning. “Alexis Razoumovski, who was married secretly to my mother. My childhood I passed travelling from one place to another; but it is quite indistinct even to me. I remember a retired little village in the South of Russia, from which I was carried off. They would, if they could, have effaced from my mind every remembrance of the past; and to that end they lavished money upon me and took me about from place to place. Count Shouvaloff, apparently, was acquainted with the circumstances. Not long ago, when travelling in Europe, he expressed the wish to see me, and we met secretly.”

“What! you saw the Count Shouvaloff? Where?” I exclaimed, amazed, as I recollected that not a few people looked upon him as her father.

“I met him at the waters of Spa.... Friends warned me of that celebrated Russian traveller, but I could not refuse him. I found him to be an elderly person, rather stout, and bearing traces of no common beauty. His dress was most costly. He came to me under an assumed name, and when speaking with me sorrowfully fixed his eyes upon me and attentively examined my features. I could see he was very agitated. I learned afterwards that he was my late mother’s favourite, Ivan Shouvaloff. I really cannot tell why he looked so moved. It is not for me, of course,--as you may well understand,--to say. That secret my mother took to her grave, with many others.”

The Princess was silent; I also.

“Whose protection, whose help, do you seek?” I at last ventured to ask,

troubled with so many impressions.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCESS ASKS ME TO ASSIST HER.

The Princess locked the paper in a casket, put it away, took up a fan, and again sitting down, began looking out of the window.

“Are you willing to help me?” she asked very seriously, instead of answering my question.

I knew not what to answer.

“Are you willing to give me, should I need it, every help in your power?”

“But what sort of help?”

“Well now, you see, should the Empress Ekaterina be willing to act conscientiously and without strife peacefully to divide the empire with me,”--the Princess uttered this very slowly and distinctly,--“I am ready to agree to anything in reason. I will give up to her the north, with Petersburg, all the Baltic provinces, and all the province of Moscow. I shall retain for myself the Caucasus--practically all the south--oh! I love the south--and part of the west. Oh! be quite sure I shall respect a peaceful division. I shall be quite satisfied with the arrangement. I shall people my dominions; I shall arrange all in my own Fatherland. You will see I am a _masteritsa_.[13] First of all, of course, I shall arrange matters in Oukraine and Poland. Of course you are from Oukraine?” she asked me suddenly, fixing her eyes on me; “and I passed my childhood there. In case Ekaterina should not agree,” continued she, frowning, “of course, nothing remains for me but to try the force of arms. I intend going to Constantinople, to the Sultan. He expects me. I shall lead his army on to the Balkans, and on the borders of the Danube shall meet the army of Ekaterina. Then I will have my revenge. I shall find enough people willing to help me; all the discontented--for instance, the commodore of the fleet,--Orloff! Eh! what do you say to that?”

“Orloff!” I repeated in amazement.

“Of course; he himself. You are astonished, eh?” answered the Princess, fanning herself and looking me boldly in the face. “Yes; what do you say to that?”

“Excuse me, Your Grace, but I cannot help speaking out my earnest conviction that all this is but a child’s dream. On what do you found your hopes of such--excuse me the expression--such treason from the count?”

“Treason!”--cried out the Princess, suddenly reddening; “but, of course, you must be excused. You were so long a prisoner, there is a great deal for you to learn”; and she contemptuously smiled, nervously playing with her fan. “The power and the influence of the Orloffs have greatly fallen; their sworn and hidden foes, the Pânins,[14] are now in the ascendency. The empress’s favourite, Gregory Orloff, allow me to tell you, has been already replaced by another; he, in his anger, broke off the negotiations begun with the Sultan, and flew from the banks of the Danube to Petersburg. But he was not received at court, but exiled to Revel. Ah! you are astonished. Well, learn still further. Your chief, Count Alexis Orloff, his feelings as a brother insulted, no longer hides his opinions: he is ripe for revenge; and there is no doubt, of course, that he can be very useful to me. You see, what news! I have already sent a letter to the Count Alexis, and a short manifesto.”

“A manifesto! but what about?”

“If Orloff decides on taking my part, I advise him then to proclaim my manifesto to the fleet, take me on board, and stand up for my rights.”

“But that is impossible. Excuse me,” I tried to answer; “your actions are bold, but you have not reflected enough.”

“Why do you think so?” asked the Princess, astonished. “The malcontents are seeking revenge, the forgotten recompense for their well-known services. To Orloff alone--and that every one knows--to him alone Ekaterina owes her throne.”

The Princess rose, walked up and down the room, and at last threw the window open. She was nearly stifled. She began again explaining her plan in its smallest details: how she hoped, with the aid of the fleet, to invade Russia. She would listen to none of my arguments. It seemed as if nothing could convince her. It was plainly visible that this capricious, spoiled, self-willed woman, whose feelings burst forth like

lava hidden under ashes, thought she could measure her strength with the most desperate of men.

“You doubt; you are astonished,” she exclaimed, with a nervous tremor. “You ask why I believe in the success of my enterprise? Is it possible that you do not know?... Already many of your countrymen side with me; I am in correspondence with numbers of them.... But you--are the first Russian, the first really worthy man, that I see throwing in your lot with me.... I shall never forget the fact; it is specially dear to me.... Believe me, I shall rise victorious out of every difficulty; the darkness _will_ clear away.... Is it possible that you do not know that Russia is torn asunder by her battles, the pressgang for the recruits, the fires, the plagues? Is it possible you do not know that the country is worn out with her taxations, that on the borders of the Volga there rages a terrible, bloody insurrection? Your army is badly clothed, and still worse fed; ... all are discontented, all grumble.... You are not going to tell me that you, a lieutenant in the Russian navy, know nothing of all this? Yes, all the nation will hail me with delight; the army will meet with joy a Russian-born princess, Elizabeth II., just as they once met Ekaterina.”

I was indignant at her childish and blind confidence in herself.

“Well, let it be so. Do you speak Russian?” I decided on asking her.

The Princess blushed. “I do not speak it. I have, of course, forgotten it, unfortunately,” she answered, coughing. “In my infancy, when but three years old, I was taken from Oukraine to Siberia, where they nearly poisoned me; from there into Persia, where I was placed with an old woman in Ispahan, who took me to live in Bagdad, where a certain M. Fournier taught me French.... So it would have been rather strange if I did remember my own language.”

I still continued sitting, my eyes fixed on the ground. I could not raise them to her face.

“And Dimitri Tzarevitch,[15] whom all Moscow met so joyfully, did he speak Russian?” asked the Princess contemptuously. “Besides, what can languages prove? Children learn and unlearn everything so easily.”

“Dimitri spoke with a ‘Little Russian’ accent,” answered I. “And then, after all, he was but--a pretender!”

“Gran Dio!” she exclaimed; and again coughing, the Princess laughed. “And you’re not ashamed of repeating those idle tales? Listen to me,

and remember my words."...

The Princess threw herself back in her chair. Bright spots appeared in her cheeks.

"Dimitri was the real tzarevitch." She said this in a voice of conviction. "Yes, the real tzarevitch. He was saved from the hands of the assassin Godounoff by the cleverness of those around him, almost by a miracle, just as I was saved from the poison they gave me in Siberia. Ah! you did not know that? Yes, think about it all a little more. Oh! Signor Konsov, tell your tales to some one else, but not to me, who have studied in a strange land the genealogy of our house. The Shah of Persia offered his hand and his throne to me, but I refused him; he is the eternal enemy of Russia.... I _shall_ be acknowledged. Do you hear? They _must_ acknowledge me," said the Princess, with great dignity.

Striking her knee with her fan, and beginning again to cough, she continued,--

"I believe in the star of my destiny, and therefore I choose you as my ambassador to Count Orloff. I do not exact a speedy answer. Think over it, weigh well my words, and then give me your decision. You, again I repeat, are the first Russian in an honourable military position whom I have met abroad. You also have suffered, and also escaped from prison by a miracle. Who knows? perhaps Heaven saved you, like many others, and sent you to me."

Having said this, the Princess rose, and, with a most majestic salute, signified that the audience was concluded.



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By Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol
Translated by D. J. Hogarth
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To the door of an inn in the provincial town of N. there drew up a smart britchka--a light spring-carriage of the sort affected by bachelors, retired lieutenant-colonels, staff-captains, land-owners possessed of about a hundred souls, and, in short, all persons who rank as gentlemen of the intermediate category. In the britchka was seated such a gentleman--a man who, though not handsome, was not ill-favoured, not over-fat, and not over-thin. Also, though not over-elderly, he was not over-young. His arrival produced no stir in the town, and was accompanied by no particular incident, beyond that a couple of peasants who happened to be standing at the door of a dramshop exchanged a few comments with reference to the equipage rather than to the individual who was seated in it. “Look at that carriage,” one of them said to the other. “Think you it will be going as far as Moscow?” “I think it will,” replied his companion. “But not as far as Kazan, eh?” “No, not as far as Kazan.” With that the conversation ended. Presently, as the britchka was approaching the inn, it was met by a young man in a pair of very short, very tight breeches of white dimity, a quasi-fashionable frockcoat, and a dickey fastened with a pistol-shaped bronze tie-pin. The young man turned his head as he passed the britchka and eyed it attentively; after which he clapped his hand to his cap (which was in danger of being removed by the wind) and resumed his way. On the vehicle reaching the inn door, its occupant found standing there to welcome him the polevoi, or waiter, of the establishment--an individual of such nimble and brisk movement that even to distinguish the character of his face was impossible. Running out with a napkin in one hand and his lanky form clad in a tailcoat, reaching almost to the nape of his neck, he tossed back his locks, and escorted the gentleman upstairs, along a wooden gallery, and so to the bedchamber which God had prepared for the gentleman’s reception. The said bedchamber was of quite ordinary appearance, since the inn belonged to the species to be found in all provincial towns--the species wherein, for two roubles a day, travellers may obtain a room swarming with black-beetles, and communicating by a doorway with the apartment adjoining. True, the doorway may be blocked up with a wardrobe; yet behind it, in all probability, there will be standing a silent, motionless neighbour whose ears are burning to learn every possible detail concerning the latest arrival. The inn’s exterior corresponded with its interior. Long, and consisting only of two storeys, the building had its lower half destitute of stucco; with the result that the dark-red bricks, originally more or less dingy, had

grown yet dingier under the influence of atmospheric changes. As for the upper half of the building, it was, of course, painted the usual tint of unfading yellow. Within, on the ground floor, there stood a number of benches heaped with horse-collars, rope, and sheepskins; while the window-seat accommodated a sbitentshik [4], cheek by jowl with a samovar [5]--the latter so closely resembling the former in appearance that, but for the fact of the samovar possessing a pitch-black lip, the samovar and the sbitentshik might have been two of a pair.

During the traveller's inspection of his room his luggage was brought into the apartment. First came a portmanteau of white leather whose raggedness indicated that the receptacle had made several previous journeys. The bearers of the same were the gentleman's coachman, Selifan (a little man in a large overcoat), and the gentleman's valet, Petrushka--the latter a fellow of about thirty, clad in a worn, over-ample jacket which formerly had graced his master's shoulders, and possessed of a nose and a pair of lips whose coarseness communicated to his face rather a sullen expression. Behind the portmanteau came a small dispatch-box of redwood, lined with birch bark, a boot-case, and (wrapped in blue paper) a roast fowl; all of which having been deposited, the coachman departed to look after his horses, and the valet to establish himself in the little dark anteroom or kennel where already he had stored a cloak, a bagful of livery, and his own peculiar smell. Pressing the narrow bedstead back against the wall, he covered it with the tiny remnant of mattress--a remnant as thin and flat (perhaps also as greasy) as a pancake--which he had managed to beg of the landlord of the establishment.

While the attendants had been thus setting things straight the gentleman had repaired to the common parlour. The appearance of common parlours of the kind is known to every one who travels. Always they have varnished walls which, grown black in their upper portions with tobacco smoke, are, in their lower, grown shiny with the friction of customers' backs--more especially with that of the backs of such local tradesmen as, on market-days, make it their regular practice to resort to the local hostelry for a glass of tea. Also, parlours of this kind invariably contain smutty ceilings, an equally smutty chandelier, a number of pendent shades which jump and rattle whenever the waiter scurries across the shabby oilcloth with a trayful of glasses (the glasses looking like a flock of birds roosting by the seashore), and a selection of oil paintings. In short, there are certain objects which one sees in every inn. In the present case the only outstanding feature of the room was the fact that in one of the paintings a nymph was portrayed as possessing breasts of a size such as the reader can never in his life have beheld. A similar caricaturing of nature is to be noted

in the historical pictures (of unknown origin, period, and creation) which reach us--sometimes through the instrumentality of Russian magnates who profess to be connoisseurs of art--from Italy; owing to the said magnates having made such purchases solely on the advice of the couriers who have escorted them.

To resume, however--our traveller removed his cap, and divested his neck of a parti-coloured woollen scarf of the kind which a wife makes for her husband with her own hands, while accompanying the gift with interminable injunctions as to how best such a garment ought to be folded. True, bachelors also wear similar gauds, but, in their case, God alone knows who may have manufactured the articles! For my part, I cannot endure them. Having unfolded the scarf, the gentleman ordered dinner, and whilst the various dishes were being got ready--cabbage soup, a pie several weeks old, a dish of marrow and peas, a dish of sausages and cabbage, a roast fowl, some salted cucumber, and the sweet tart which stands perpetually ready for use in such establishments; whilst, I say, these things were either being warmed up or brought in cold, the gentleman induced the waiter to retail certain fragments of tittle-tattle concerning the late landlord of the hostelry, the amount of income which the hostelry produced, and the character of its present proprietor. To the last-mentioned inquiry the waiter returned the answer invariably given in such cases--namely, “My master is a terribly hard man, sir.” Curious that in enlightened Russia so many people cannot even take a meal at an inn without chattering to the attendant and making free with him! Nevertheless not ALL the questions which the gentleman asked were aimless ones, for he inquired who was Governor of the town, who President of the Local Council, and who Public Prosecutor. In short, he omitted no single official of note, while asking also (though with an air of detachment) the most exact particulars concerning the landowners of the neighbourhood. Which of them, he inquired, possessed serfs, and how many of them? How far from the town did those landowners reside? What was the character of each landowner, and was he in the habit of paying frequent visits to the town? The gentleman also made searching inquiries concerning the hygienic condition of the countryside. Was there, he asked, much sickness about--whether sporadic fever, fatal forms of ague, smallpox, or what not? Yet, though his solicitude concerning these matters showed more than ordinary curiosity, his bearing retained its gravity unimpaired, and from time to time he blew his nose with portentous fervour. Indeed, the manner in which he accomplished this latter feat was marvellous in the extreme, for, though that member emitted sounds equal to those of a trumpet in intensity, he could yet, with his accompanying air of guileless dignity, evoke the waiter’s undivided respect--so much so that, whenever the sounds of the nose reached that menial’s ears, he would shake back his locks,

straighten himself into a posture of marked solicitude, and inquire afresh, with head slightly inclined, whether the gentleman happened to require anything further. After dinner the guest consumed a cup of coffee, and then, seating himself upon the sofa, with, behind him, one of those wool-covered cushions which, in Russian taverns, resemble nothing so much as a cobblestone or a brick, fell to snoring; whereafter, returning with a start to consciousness, he ordered himself to be conducted to his room, flung himself at full length upon the bed, and once more slept soundly for a couple of hours. Aroused, eventually, by the waiter, he, at the latter's request, inscribed a fragment of paper with his name, his surname, and his rank (for communication, in accordance with the law, to the police): and on that paper the waiter, leaning forward from the corridor, read, syllable by syllable: "Paul Ivanovitch Chichikov, Collegiate Councillor--Landowner--Travelling on Private Affairs." The waiter had just time to accomplish this feat before Paul Ivanovitch Chichikov set forth to inspect the town. Apparently the place succeeded in satisfying him, and, to tell the truth, it was at least up to the usual standard of our provincial capitals. Where the staring yellow of stone edifices did not greet his eye he found himself confronted with the more modest grey of wooden ones; which, consisting, for the most part, of one or two storeys (added to the range of attics which provincial architects love so well), looked almost lost amid the expanses of street and intervening medleys of broken or half-finished partition-walls. At other points evidence of more life and movement was to be seen, and here the houses stood crowded together and displayed dilapidated, rain-blurred signboards whereon boots or cakes or pairs of blue breeches inscribed "Arshavski, Tailor," and so forth, were depicted. Over a shop containing hats and caps was written "Vassili Thedorov, Foreigner"; while, at another spot, a signboard portrayed a billiard table and two players--the latter clad in frockcoats of the kind usually affected by actors whose part it is to enter the stage during the closing act of a piece, even though, with arms sharply crooked and legs slightly bent, the said billiard players were taking the most careful aim, but succeeding only in making abortive strokes in the air. Each emporium of the sort had written over it: "This is the best establishment of its kind in the town." Also, al fresco in the streets there stood tables heaped with nuts, soap, and gingerbread (the latter but little distinguishable from the soap), and at an eating-house there was displayed the sign of a plump fish transfixed with a gaff. But the sign most frequently to be discerned was the insignia of the State, the double-headed eagle (now replaced, in this connection, with the laconic inscription "Dramshop"). As for the paving of the town, it was uniformly bad.

The gentleman peered also into the municipal gardens, which contained

only a few sorry trees that were poorly selected, requiring to be propped with oil-painted, triangular green supports, and able to boast of a height no greater than that of an ordinary walking-stick. Yet recently the local paper had said (apropos of a gala) that, “Thanks to the efforts of our Civil Governor, the town has become enriched with a pleasaunce full of umbrageous, spaciously-branching trees. Even on the most sultry day they afford agreeable shade, and indeed gratifying was it to see the hearts of our citizens panting with an impulse of gratitude as their eyes shed tears in recognition of all that their Governor has done for them!”

Next, after inquiring of a gendarme as to the best ways and means of finding the local council, the local law-courts, and the local Governor, should he (Chichikov) have need of them, the gentleman went on to inspect the river which ran through the town. En route he tore off a notice affixed to a post, in order that he might the more conveniently read it after his return to the inn. Also, he bestowed upon a lady of pleasant exterior who, escorted by a footman laden with a bundle, happened to be passing along a wooden sidewalk a prolonged stare. Lastly, he threw around him a comprehensive glance (as though to fix in his mind the general topography of the place) and betook himself home. There, gently aided by the waiter, he ascended the stairs to his bedroom, drank a glass of tea, and, seating himself at the table, called for a candle; which having been brought him, he produced from his pocket the notice, held it close to the flame, and conned its tenour--slightly contracting his right eye as he did so. Yet there was little in the notice to call for remark. All that it said was that shortly one of Kotzebue’s [6] plays would be given, and that one of the parts in the play was to be taken by a certain Monsieur Poplevin, and another by a certain Mademoiselle Ziablova, while the remaining parts were to be filled by a number of less important personages. Nevertheless the gentleman perused the notice with careful attention, and even jotted down the prices to be asked for seats for the performance. Also, he remarked that the bill had been printed in the press of the Provincial Government. Next, he turned over the paper, in order to see if anything further was to be read on the reverse side; but, finding nothing there, he refolded the document, placed it in the box which served him as a receptacle for odds and ends, and brought the day to a close with a portion of cold veal, a bottle of pickles, and a sound sleep.

The following day he devoted to paying calls upon the various municipal officials--a first, and a very respectful, visit being paid to the Governor. This personage turned out to resemble Chichikov himself in that he was neither fat nor thin. Also, he wore the riband of the order of Saint Anna about his neck, and was reported to have been recommended

also for the star. For the rest, he was large and good-natured, and had a habit of amusing himself with occasional spells of knitting. Next, Chichikov repaired to the Vice-Governor's, and thence to the house of the Public Prosecutor, to that of the President of the Local Council, to that of the Chief of Police, to that of the Commissioner of Taxes, and to that of the local Director of State Factories. True, the task of remembering every big-wig in this world of ours is not a very easy one; but at least our visitor displayed the greatest activity in his work of paying calls, seeing that he went so far as to pay his respects also to the Inspector of the Municipal Department of Medicine and to the City Architect. Thereafter he sat thoughtfully in his britchka--plunged in meditation on the subject of whom else it might be well to visit. However, not a single magnate had been neglected, and in conversation with his hosts he had contrived to flatter each separate one. For instance to the Governor he had hinted that a stranger, on arriving in his, the Governor's province, would conceive that he had reached Paradise, so velvety were the roads. "Governors who appoint capable subordinates," had said Chichikov, "are deserving of the most ample meed of praise." Again, to the Chief of Police our hero had passed a most gratifying remark on the subject of the local gendarmery; while in his conversation with the Vice-Governor and the President of the Local Council (neither of whom had, as yet, risen above the rank of State Councillor) he had twice been guilty of the gaucherie of addressing his interlocutors with the title of "Your Excellency"--a blunder which had not failed to delight them. In the result the Governor had invited him to a reception the same evening, and certain other officials had followed suit by inviting him, one of them to dinner, a second to a tea-party, and so forth, and so forth.

Of himself, however, the traveller had spoken little; or, if he had spoken at any length, he had done so in a general sort of way and with marked modesty. Indeed, at moments of the kind his discourse had assumed something of a literary vein, in that invariably he had stated that, being a worm of no account in the world, he was deserving of no consideration at the hands of his fellows; that in his time he had undergone many strange experiences; that subsequently he had suffered much in the cause of Truth; that he had many enemies seeking his life; and that, being desirous of rest, he was now engaged in searching for a spot wherein to dwell--wherefore, having stumbled upon the town in which he now found himself, he had considered it his bounden duty to evince his respect for the chief authorities of the place. This, and no more, was all that, for the moment, the town succeeded in learning about the new arrival. Naturally he lost no time in presenting himself at the Governor's evening party. First, however, his preparations for that function occupied a space of over two hours, and necessitated an

attention to his toilet of a kind not commonly seen. That is to say, after a brief post-prandial nap he called for soap and water, and spent a considerable period in the task of scrubbing his cheeks (which, for the purpose, he supported from within with his tongue) and then of drying his full, round face, from the ears downwards, with a towel which he took from the waiter's shoulder. Twice he snorted into the waiter's countenance as he did this, and then he posted himself in front of the mirror, donned a false shirt-front, plucked out a couple of hairs which were protruding from his nose, and appeared vested in a frockcoat of bilberry-coloured check. Thereafter driving through broad streets sparsely lighted with lanterns, he arrived at the Governor's residence to find it illuminated as for a ball. Barouches with gleaming lamps, a couple of gendarmes posted before the doors, a babel of postillions' cries--nothing of a kind likely to be impressive was wanting; and, on reaching the salon, the visitor actually found himself obliged to close his eyes for a moment, so strong was the mingled sheen of lamps, candles, and feminine apparel. Everything seemed suffused with light, and everywhere, flitting and flashing, were to be seen black coats--even as on a hot summer's day flies revolve around a sugar loaf while the old housekeeper is cutting it into cubes before the open window, and the children of the house crowd around her to watch the movements of her rugged hands as those members ply the smoking pestle; and airy squadrons of flies, borne on the breeze, enter boldly, as though free of the house, and, taking advantage of the fact that the glare of the sunshine is troubling the old lady's sight, disperse themselves over broken and unbroken fragments alike, even though the lethargy induced by the opulence of summer and the rich shower of dainties to be encountered at every step has induced them to enter less for the purpose of eating than for that of showing themselves in public, of parading up and down the sugar loaf, of rubbing both their hindquarters and their fore against one another, of cleaning their bodies under the wings, of extending their forelegs over their heads and grooming themselves, and of flying out of the window again to return with other predatory squadrons. Indeed, so dazed was Chichikov that scarcely did he realise that the Governor was taking him by the arm and presenting him to his (the Governor's) lady. Yet the newly-arrived guest kept his head sufficiently to contrive to murmur some such compliment as might fittingly come from a middle-aged individual of a rank neither excessively high nor excessively low. Next, when couples had been formed for dancing and the remainder of the company found itself pressed back against the walls, Chichikov folded his arms, and carefully scrutinised the dancers. Some of the ladies were dressed well and in the fashion, while the remainder were clad in such garments as God usually bestows upon a provincial town. Also here, as elsewhere, the men belonged to two separate and distinct categories; one of which comprised slender individuals who,

flitting around the ladies, were scarcely to be distinguished from denizens of the metropolis, so carefully, so artistically, groomed were their whiskers, so presentable their oval, clean-shaven faces, so easy the manner of their dancing attendance upon their womenfolk, so glib their French conversation as they quizzed their female companions. As for the other category, it comprised individuals who, stout, or of the same build as Chichikov (that is to say, neither very portly nor very lean), backed and sidled away from the ladies, and kept peering hither and thither to see whether the Governor's footmen had set out green tables for whist. Their features were full and plump, some of them had beards, and in no case was their hair curled or waved or arranged in what the French call "the devil-may-care" style. On the contrary, their heads were either close-cropped or brushed very smooth, and their faces were round and firm. This category represented the more respectable officials of the town. In passing, I may say that in business matters fat men always prove superior to their leaner brethren; which is probably the reason why the latter are mostly to be found in the Political Police, or acting as mere ciphers whose existence is a purely hopeless, airy, trivial one. Again, stout individuals never take a back seat, but always a front one, and, wheresoever it be, they sit firmly, and with confidence, and decline to budge even though the seat crack and bend with their weight. For comeliness of exterior they care not a rap, and therefore a dress coat sits less easily on their figures than is the case with figures of leaner individuals. Yet invariably fat men amass the greater wealth. In three years' time a thin man will not have a single serf whom he has left unpledged; whereas--well, pray look at a fat man's fortunes, and what will you see? First of all a suburban villa, and then a larger suburban villa, and then a villa close to a town, and lastly a country estate which comprises every amenity! That is to say, having served both God and the State, the stout individual has won universal respect, and will end by retiring from business, reordering his mode of life, and becoming a Russian landowner--in other words, a fine gentleman who dispenses hospitality, lives in comfort and luxury, and is destined to leave his property to heirs who are purposing to squander the same on foreign travel.

That the foregoing represents pretty much the gist of Chichikov's reflections as he stood watching the company I will not attempt to deny. And of those reflections the upshot was that he decided to join himself to the stouter section of the guests, among whom he had already recognised several familiar faces--namely, those of the Public Prosecutor (a man with beetling brows over eyes which seemed to be saying with a wink, "Come into the next room, my friend, for I have something to say to you"--though, in the main, their owner was a man of grave and taciturn habit), of the Postmaster (an insignificant-looking

individual, yet a would-be wit and a philosopher), and of the President of the Local Council (a man of much amiability and good sense). These three personages greeted Chichikov as an old acquaintance, and to their salutations he responded with a sidelong, yet a sufficiently civil, bow. Also, he became acquainted with an extremely unctuous and approachable landowner named Manilov, and with a landowner of more uncouth exterior named Sobakevitch--the latter of whom began the acquaintance by treading heavily upon Chichikov's toes, and then begging his pardon. Next, Chichikov received an offer of a "cut in" at whist, and accepted the same with his usual courteous inclination of the head. Seating themselves at a green table, the party did not rise therefrom till supper time; and during that period all conversation between the players became hushed, as is the custom when men have given themselves up to a really serious pursuit. Even the Postmaster--a talkative man by nature--had no sooner taken the cards into his hands than he assumed an expression of profound thought, pursed his lips, and retained this attitude unchanged throughout the game. Only when playing a court card was it his custom to strike the table with his fist, and to exclaim (if the card happened to be a queen), "Now, old popadia [7]!" and (if the card happened to be a king), "Now, peasant of Tambov!" To which ejaculations invariably the President of the Local Council retorted, "Ah, I have him by the ears, I have him by the ears!" And from the neighbourhood of the table other strong ejaculations relative to the play would arise, interposed with one or another of those nicknames which participants in a game are apt to apply to members of the various suits. I need hardly add that, the game over, the players fell to quarrelling, and that in the dispute our friend joined, though so artfully as to let every one see that, in spite of the fact that he was wrangling, he was doing so only in the most amicable fashion possible. Never did he say outright, "You played the wrong card at such and such a point." No, he always employed some such phrase as, "You permitted yourself to make a slip, and thus afforded me the honour of covering your deuce." Indeed, the better to keep in accord with his antagonists, he kept offering them his silver-enamelled snuff-box (at the bottom of which lay a couple of violets, placed there for the sake of their scent). In particular did the newcomer pay attention to landowners Manilov and Sobakevitch; so much so that his haste to arrive on good terms with them led to his leaving the President and the Postmaster rather in the shade. At the same time, certain questions which he put to those two landowners evinced not only curiosity, but also a certain amount of sound intelligence; for he began by asking how many peasant souls each of them possessed, and how their affairs happened at present to be situated, and then proceeded to enlighten himself also as their standing and their families. Indeed, it was not long before he had succeeded in fairly enchanting his new friends. In particular did

Manilov--a man still in his prime, and possessed of a pair of eyes which, sweet as sugar, blinked whenever he laughed--find himself unable to make enough of his enchanter. Clasping Chichikov long and fervently by the hand, he besought him to do him, Manilov, the honour of visiting his country house (which he declared to lie at a distance of not more than fifteen versts from the boundaries of the town); and in return Chichikov averred (with an exceedingly affable bow and a most sincere handshake) that he was prepared not only to fulfil his friend's behest, but also to look upon the fulfilling of it as a sacred duty. In the same way Sobakevitch said to him laconically: "And do you pay ME a visit," and then proceeded to shuffle a pair of boots of such dimensions that to find a pair to correspond with them would have been indeed difficult--more especially at the present day, when the race of epic heroes is beginning to die out in Russia.

Next day Chichikov dined and spent the evening at the house of the Chief of Police--a residence where, three hours after dinner, every one sat down to whist, and remained so seated until two o'clock in the morning. On this occasion Chichikov made the acquaintance of, among others, a landowner named Nozdrev--a dissipated little fellow of thirty who had no sooner exchanged three or four words with his new acquaintance than he began to address him in the second person singular. Yet although he did the same to the Chief of Police and the Public Prosecutor, the company had no sooner seated themselves at the card-table than both the one and the other of these functionaries started to keep a careful eye upon Nozdrev's tricks, and to watch practically every card which he played. The following evening Chichikov spent with the President of the Local Council, who received his guests--even though the latter included two ladies--in a greasy dressing-gown. Upon that followed an evening at the Vice-Governor's, a large dinner party at the house of the Commissioner of Taxes, a smaller dinner-party at the house of the Public Prosecutor (a very wealthy man), and a subsequent reception given by the Mayor. In short, not an hour of the day did Chichikov find himself forced to spend at home, and his return to the inn became necessary only for the purposes of sleeping. Somehow or other he had landed on his feet, and everywhere he figured as an experienced man of the world. No matter what the conversation chanced to be about, he always contrived to maintain his part in the same. Did the discourse turn upon horse-breeding, upon horse-breeding he happened to be peculiarly well-qualified to speak. Did the company fall to discussing well-bred dogs, at once he had remarks of the most pertinent kind possible to offer. Did the company touch upon a prosecution which had recently been carried out by the Excise Department, instantly he showed that he too was not wholly unacquainted with legal affairs. Did an opinion chance to be expressed concerning billiards, on that subject too he was at least able to avoid committing

a blunder. Did a reference occur to virtue, concerning virtue he hastened to deliver himself in a way which brought tears to every eye. Did the subject in hand happen to be the distilling of brandy--well, that was a matter concerning which he had the soundest of knowledge. Did any one happen to mention Customs officials and inspectors, from that moment he expatiated as though he too had been both a minor functionary and a major. Yet a remarkable fact was the circumstance that he always contrived to temper his omniscience with a certain readiness to give way, a certain ability so to keep a rein upon himself that never did his utterances become too loud or too soft, or transcend what was perfectly befitting. In a word, he was always a gentleman of excellent manners, and every official in the place felt pleased when he saw him enter the door. Thus the Governor gave it as his opinion that Chichikov was a man of excellent intentions; the Public Prosecutor, that he was a good man of business; the Chief of Gendarmery, that he was a man of education; the President of the Local Council, that he was a man of breeding and refinement; and the wife of the Chief of Gendarmery, that his politeness of behaviour was equalled only by his affability of bearing. Nay, even Sobakevitch--who as a rule never spoke well of ANY ONE--said to his lanky wife when, on returning late from the town, he undressed and betook himself to bed by her side: “My dear, this evening, after dining with the Chief of Police, I went on to the Governor’s, and met there, among others, a certain Paul Ivanovitch Chichikov, who is a Collegiate Councillor and a very pleasant fellow.” To this his spouse replied “Hm!” and then dealt him a hearty kick in the ribs.

Such were the flattering opinions earned by the newcomer to the town; and these opinions he retained until the time when a certain speciality of his, a certain scheme of his (the reader will learn presently what it was), plunged the majority of the townsfolk into a sea of perplexity.



CHAPTER 1 of MOSCOW IN FLAMES
BY G. P. Danilevski
Translated from the Russian by Dr. A. S. Rappoport
from the Internet Archive PDF

Gregory Petrovitsh Danilevski, the author of " Moscow in Flames," now published for the first time in English (it is also the first book from his pen rendered accessible to the British reading public), was born on April 14th, 1829, ^^ Danilovka, in the province of Kharkoff. He was descended from an ancient Cossack family, and his work frequently reflects the roaming, vagabond spirit of his ancestors. He passed his early childhood in the peace and quiet of his little native village which he greatly loved, and which later he often described in the stories he published during the first half of his literary career.

His childish imagination was fed with the old tales of heroic deeds and the old legends of his Ukrainian home ; all of which later became for him a storehouse of material for his Ukrainian stories.
1.

Never had the people of Moscow
and its neighbourhood enjoyed themselves so much as during
the first months of the terrible and gloomy year
*' twelve." In the suburbs, as in the city, balls were
succeeded by balls only varied by promenades,
concerts and mascarades. Winged Cupid seemed
to be hovering over Moscow, that haven and refuge
of the shipwrecked, such as the Orloffs, the
Suboffs, etc. Numerous were the gallant adventures,
the elopements from beneath the paternal
roof and the duels in a society that was distinguished
by many brilliant and remarkable beauties, the

inspiration of the poets of the day. The Moscovites met to enjoy their society at the houses of the Razumovsld's, the Neledinski-Meletzkis, the Arkharoffs, Apraxins and Buturlins.

May was approaching its end. In spite of the appearance of the comet and the incessant and disquieting rumours of a probable break-up of relations with Napoleon, no one believed in the possibility of war, and no one paid any heed.

In one of the wealthy houses in the quarter of the Patriarchal Ponds, the house of a rich sexagenarian widow of a brigadier-general, Princess Sheleshpansky, a crowded reception of city and country guests was held one evening. It was the birthday of the first great-grandson of the Princess. The year before, on an equally beautiful April day, the marriage of her eldest grand-daughter, the joyful and vivacious Xenia Valerianovna Kramalin, had been celebrated at Lyubanova,one of the Princess' estates. She had marriedIlya Borisovitsh Tropinin, the secretary of theSenate of Moscow and a functionary of the TheatreAdministration.

Besides celebrating the christening of her great grandson with such splendour, the Princess had another reason for wishing that joy should surround her. Her second grand-daughter, the proud and serious-minded Aurora KramaUn, was on the point of following the dictates of her young heart and betrothing herself to Basil Alexeievitsh Perovski, a general staff officer, who was on leave at Moscow. The old Princess was pleased that he should pay such assiduous court to Aurora. Perovski had been introduced to Aurora at the last winter ball by her sister's husband, Ilya Tropinin, the young officer's friend and schoolfellow.

The majority of the Princess' guests were already leaving ; old Mordvinoff, Prince Dolgoruki, Prince Calembour as he was called, Neledinski-Meletzki, Sergius Glinka, and the Editor of the Rousski Vjestnik had gone. Only a few relations and intimates remained, among whom was an old friend of her late husband. Count Rostoptshin, who had just been appointed commandant-in-chief of Moscow. He was a man of tall stature and carried his fifty years very lightly ; he had

dark, very brilliant eyes, a broad, open forehead and narrow side whiskers framing his face. He talked loudly, even shouted when he became animated. The Princess confided in him, though she did not mention it to any of her other guests, that Aurora's admirer was the natural son of the Minister of Public Instruction, a grand seigneur of the Ukraine.

When taking his leave, Rostoptshin, with a smile, designated Basil Perovski, who, clad in a new uniform, was sitting in a corner, and half whispered to her : " Your grand-daughter is wrong to delay ; the admirer is acceptable and you ought to settle the matter before he returns to his duties."

'* But why hurry, Count ? Aurora is not yet eighteen," replied the Princess. " In any case, she will not be an old maid. Everything is in God's hands. Besides, carnival is approaching, and the young man's leave is now up. He promises to return after the Day of Assumption, by the end of August, and then, if we are alive, we shall celebrate the betrothal and wedding at once." " You will invite me. Princess. But take my advice, do not protract this love-affair ; you know that people are talking of the possibility of war."

** But, my dear Count, where is this Napoleon ? " said the Princess. " There are many leagues between him and us. And then, are we not under the guardianship of the holy protectors of Moscow ? And do we not also rely upon your ability, Monsieur le Comte ? " Rostoptshin looked at the other guests in a worried manner, drew on his gloves and moved to go, then, suddenly, drawing his brows decisively together, he took a seat near the Princess.

" Do you know anything new ? " asked Anna Arcadievna.

Rostoptshin nodded. The Princess nearly fainted.

" Speak, my dear, speak," she said, in great distress, as she searched in her reticule for her smelling salts and then inhaled their perfume.

" This is neither the place nor the moment," said the Count," I shall come to see you to-morrow."

" No, no, tell me this evening, do not make me anxious. You know what a coward I am."

" But to-night you have guests, and no doubt

they will play boston, and you know how I detest
all card games."
*' Do not talk against the cards. Remember
that Talleyrand said : * He who never plays cards
in his youth prepares a sad old age for himself.
'Well, till this evening, I shall be alone for you." "
I shall do my best to come.

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